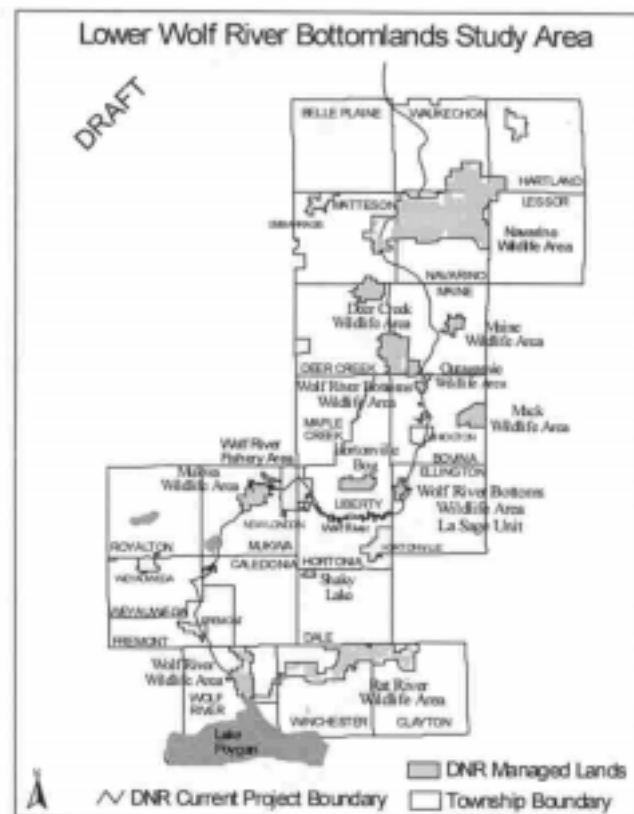


Potential Project Boundary Alternatives

In September 1999, the Department initiated a master planning effort for Department owned or leased properties along the Lower Wolf River. This project has become the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands. This planning effort contains several wildlife, fishery, and natural areas that need master plans either developed or revised. Based on input received from the public and preliminary inventories, it was suggested that the planning team explore what opportunities there may be for the Department to expand its current property boundaries (project boundary) to potentially acquire, protect, and enhance wildlife and fisheries habitat, rare species and communities, and provide recreational and educational opportunities.

The planning team identified a study area (see map to the right) which include townships where the Wolf River flows through; current Department ownership exists; or there's a tributary confluence. Following further public input, the planning team drafted 5 possible project boundaries within the study area which were presented at the September open houses. Those alternatives have been revised per public comments received. The following maps and brief descriptions are of 3 possible project boundary alternatives that will be used in future discussions.



Alternative A: Department Properties Rounded-Off

Some people have asked the planning team to consider only rounding off properties to roads. It seems that this is also a reasonable compromise for those that feel there should not be expanded public ownership. The expansion proposed here is small.

The rounding off of properties would emphasize an improved boundary definition. An improved boundary definition would be done by expanding boundaries out to the nearest road. This could alleviate trespass problems and user confusion on where the property begins or ends. This may also assist in land management practices such as use of roads as firebreaks and access for timber stand improvements.

This alternative would exclude lands between Department properties, the river shoreline, and areas with many rare species or natural communities. It also would not provide for wildlife or recreational corridors.

Complementary management actions on private lands within project boundaries are being accomplished by cooperators, this would continue with this proposed expansion. However, there are no efforts to focus and coordinate activities within the study area for further natural resource protection or recreational expansion.



Potential Project Boundary Alternatives (cont'd)

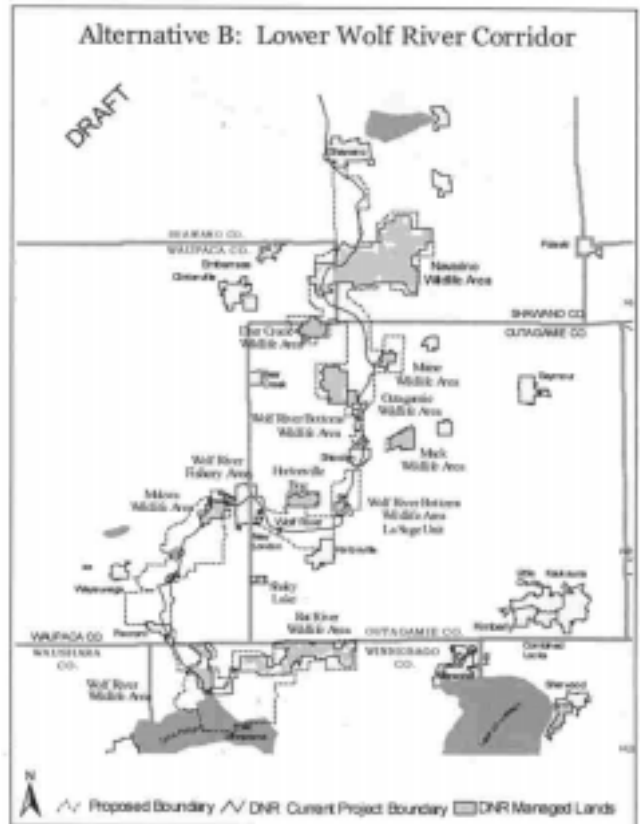
Alternative B: The Lower Wolf River Corridor

This project boundary alternative would include additional lands along the river corridor. Opportunities increase for: providing wildlife and endangered/threatened species habitat (e.g. red shouldered hawk), fishery resources and water quality management; and linear corridor connections for wildlife, recreation, and educational pursuits.

An expanded area would also increase opportunities to develop partnerships, provide incentives, and utilize acquisitions or easements for assistance in the management of the Lower Wolf River resources.

This alternative shows that the long-term acquisition goals would require others participation (e.g. land trusts) not just the Department. People have said they favor this alternative because it could link the various properties together, along the river corridor.

Lands that are excluded from this alternative are buffer areas wetlands, minimally developed lakes, and tributaries of the Lower Wolf River.

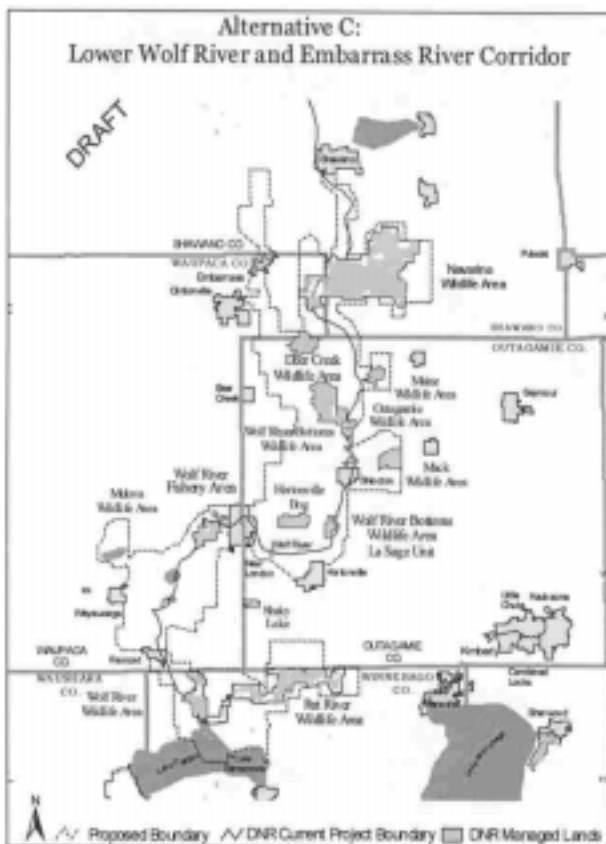


Alternative C: A Lower Wolf & Embarrass River Corridor

This project boundary alternative is a combination of two early alternatives. People commented that they wanted an alternative that includes the Embarrass River Corridor and tributaries of the Lower Wolf (e.g. Shiocton River) but early draft alternatives were too big and ambitious. Included in this alternative are lands between Department properties, the Lower Wolf and Embarrass Rivers, tributaries, and minimally developed lakes. This alternative would be targeting the greatest amount of area for the future and would provide the most management options for the future.

This alternative would provide more opportunities for conservation and recreation activities. However, the Department may focus only on key areas for acquisition of land or easements while coordinating land protection and management efforts over a larger area with more partners (landowners, local governments, non-profit organizations, and land trusts).

Implementing coordinated management efforts may take longer since there would be more area involved as well as multiple partners. Additionally, financial resources and manpower may also be stretched by working with an area of this size.



Lower Wolf River Bottomlands - Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we looking at new project boundaries for the Lower Wolf River Bottomlands?

The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands has a mixture of wetland cover and hardwood forest that provides habitat for a variety of wildlife resources, spawning areas of walleye and sturgeon, and threatened or endangered species. Protecting and enhancing these resources, along with providing recreational and educational opportunities, for current and future generations is important to the people who live, work, and recreate here. The Department of Natural Resources (Department) is one organization that can help in providing these opportunities. Some tools that the department is using are the purchase of fee title, easements, leases or donations. The Department also cooperates with many organizations on projects, for example habitat protection or restoration. Expanding current project boundaries would allow for additional opportunities perhaps in a more coordinated manner.

What is a project boundary?

The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands "project boundary" is the mapped area within which the Natural Resources Board will give authority to the Department to acquire land rights from willing sellers. This project boundary area is likely to contain the most important natural resources. Additionally, there may be other reasons to include lands within the project boundary such as providing opportunities to create wildlife corridors, improving public access to state owned land, and providing for recreational and educational opportunities.

What does it mean if my land is within the boundary? I don't want the DNR telling me how to manage my land.

Having land within the boundary makes it eligible for purchase by the Department at fair market value, but only if you want to sell and only if acquisition funds are available. You're not obliged to sell, nor are you subject to any new restrictions or regulations.

A master plan will be developed outlining land management activities for state-owned lands within an approved project boundary. Part of the master planning includes identifying how any additional lands would be managed if they are acquired by Department at some time in the future. The master plan does not dictate how private lands are managed within a project boundary and again it does not require anyone to sell their land if they do not wish to.

What will the final Lower Wolf River Bottomlands project area boundary look like and how do you know which lands within the boundary you would want to buy?

The project boundary represents long-term goals for state ownership. The eventual size and shape of the area within the project boundary to be held in the public trust will depend on availability of willing sellers and acquisition funds.

The Lower Wolf River area has threatened plants, animals, and ecological communities needing protection. It also has excellent populations of fish for angling and wildlife for hunting and viewing. These natural assets will be important considerations in the Department's decision to purchase lands or easements.

In addition to highly important undeveloped areas, the project boundary will include agricultural lands. When the Department acquires agricultural land within the boundary, creative options to keep farms in production will be explored (i.e. using conservation easements or purchase of development rights).

What if I don't want to sell my land? Can the Department condemn my property?

If you don't want to sell your land that is your decision. For condemnation, all units of government, state, county, town, city, school districts, lake districts, sanitary districts, etc., have the statutory authority of eminent domain. However, it is the policy of the Natural Resources Board to purchase land only as it becomes available from willing sellers. The Department can only acquire land by condemnation if the Natural Resources Board, two standing committees of the Legislature and the Governor approve the action. It is important to note that the Department has not had an eminent domain procedure in over 25 years.

How would I go about selling my land to the Department?

Not all lands within the boundary will meet project needs, but if you are considering selling land located within the project boundary, the Department will be interested in talking with you. When you contact us, one of our real estate staff will call to set up a visit with you to discuss your property and to completely explain the purchasing process.

If your land meets project needs and acquisition funding is available, we can begin the purchase process. It begins by the completion of "fair market value" real es-

Frequently Asked Questions (cont'd)

tate appraisals by either certified/licensed staff or private contract real estate appraisers. An offer for the property will be made based on the appraisals. Acceptance of any offers is up to you and your family. Upon acceptance of any offers, an "option to purchase" would be signed. This option gives the Department time to notify local officials of a proposed purchase, seek approval of the Natural Resources Board, the Joint Committee of Finance if necessary, and the Governor. Upon approvals the real estate closing process, including title work and any necessary surveys, would be completed. Department staff will be available to assist you through this process.

How soon will the Department start buying land?

The Department has no purchase timetables, but would hope to begin acquisitions after the Natural Resources Board approves a preferred project boundary. Acquisitions will continue over a long period of time and depends on the willingness of sellers and the availability of funds.

What is the effect on township tax rolls if the Department purchases land within a project boundary?

There is no net loss of tax revenue to the various taxing units of governments due to Department purchase of property. By law, the Department makes an aid-in-lieu of tax payment equivalent to and in many cases greater than the taxes currently being paid by the sellers. This fair share of aid, which includes the cost of improvements present at the time of purchase, has been paid for all land purchased by Department since the 1992. These payments are especially attractive to townships when considering that state ownership greatly reduces or eliminates the demand for previously furnished domestic services such as schools, busing, roads, refuse pick-up and police and fire protection.

How else can I preserve and protect my land without selling to the Department?

Most land rights acquisitions for the project will consist of the purchase of fee title or conservation easement rights by the Department, but landowner donations of fee title or development rights to the State or to a non-profit conservation organization are also possible.

There are numerous "tools" or programs available that will help compensate landowners for preserving and protecting their lands. Below is a partial list of tools

available for achieving land protection while maintaining private ownership. If any of these options appeal to you more than selling your land to the Department, we strongly encourage you to pursue them.

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Conservation Easements
- Priority Watershed Easements
- Land Trusts (i.e. Northeast WI Land Trust)
- Zoning Alternatives
- Targeted Runoff Management Grants
- Grant Programs
- Deed Restrictions

Where will the Department get the money to buy land for the Lower Wolf River Bottoms project?

The Department will buy land or easements for the project primarily with funds from Wisconsin's Stewardship Program. Other sources such as the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson Acts may also be used. These federal acts provide funds from additional fees anglers and hunters paid on their purchase of fishing and hunting supplies. Other federal grants the Department may utilize are the Coastal Management Grant program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

What assurances can the Department give me against future restrictions within the boundary?

Defining a Department project boundary neither adds restrictions nor changes landowner rights to their property within that boundary. However, the Department is unable to predict, or have control over, the ordinances that may be adopted by local governments in and near the project area.



November 28 and 29 Meeting Formats

On Tuesday, November 28th and Wednesday November 29th, we will be hosting 2 public meetings. The focus of the meetings will be to discuss and evaluate 3 proposed boundary alternatives. Below is the tentative agenda for the meeting (the format will be the same at each meeting).

- 5:00 – 5:30 pm Welcome, meeting purpose, process update
- 5:30 – 7:15 pm Facilitated work group exercises
- 7:15 – 7:45 pm Work groups report out to the large group
- 7:45 – 8:00 pm Next steps and wrap up

Since we will have a lot to accomplish during the meeting we are also offering an informal informational hour from 4 – 5 pm. This hour will be used to give

people an opportunity to review past materials and ask staff questions in a semi-open house style. But we want to be clear that at 5 pm the working meeting will begin.

We hope that you will join us at one of these working meetings. As always, if you are unable to attend or have questions please contact Jill Mrotek, 920/492-5830 to discuss how your comments, ideas, or suggestions can be incorporated.

If you are planning on attending one of the meetings, we would appreciate it if you would fill out and return the rsvp below.

*Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving.
The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands
Planning Team*



Wolf River shoreline

Meeting RSVP

In order to plan and make meeting room arrangements, it would be helpful to know how many people anticipate attending these meetings. If you plan to attend, please return the RSVP below by November 22, 2000. You also can reply by email to mrotej@dnr.state.wi.us, or by phone at 920/492-5830.

If you are unable to attend, you will have an opportunity to review and comment on the results of the meeting via newsletters and web updates. For more information or questions, contact Jill Mrotek, 920/492-5830 (or email to mrotej@dnr.state.wi.us).

Thank you.

✂ -----

☐ I plan to attend on **Tuesday, November 28, 2000**

☐ I plan to attend on **Wednesday, November 29, 2000**

Return by November 22 to:

Wisconsin DNR
Attn: Jill Mrotek
1125 N. Military Ave.
Green Bay, WI 54307

Name: _____

Affiliation (if any): _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____ Phone: _____



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
1125 N. Military Ave
PO Box 10448
Green Bay, WI 54307-0448